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BIBLE SOCIETIES AND MISSIONS: THEIR JOINT CONTRIBUTION TO RACE DEVELOPMENT

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The American Bible Society observed in May, 1916, the hundredth anniversary of its foundation. The British and Foreign Bible Society celebrated its centennial in 1904. Several of the greater foreign missionary societies, notably the American Board, had marked similar anniversaries in the intervening years. Both Bible societies named have published elaborate histories of their transactions during the hundred years of their existence. The British and Foreign Bible Society has published also a monumental catalogue in four volumes of its collection of Bibles, a collection which from many points of view is without rival in the world. The society has endeavored to include in this library, besides many volumes of great interest in connection with the history of the printing of the Bible in European languages especially in English, an example of every Bible or portion of the Bible printed in any language whatsoever in connection with the missionary work in Asia, Africa and the islands within the last one hundred and twenty years.

These facts have called renewed attention to the connection of Bible society and missionary work. They suggest reflection upon the relation of these two great movements, the one to the other. They give occasion for an endeavor in this brief article to call to mind some aspects at least of the contribution which these two agencies conjointly have made to the development of races and the history of culture. This contribution has been of primary significance indeed for Europe and America. That however to which it is desired particularly to draw attention is the value of this

contribution in the development of the races of Asia and Africa and the Islands during the nineteenth century, the century which has witnessed the greatest expansion of Christendom and the widest spread of the influence of European civilization.

The significance of the relation of the Bible societies to missions can hardly be exaggerated. On the one hand, the British and Foreign Bible Society, established in 1804, following as it did in the wake of the London Missionary Society and of the British Baptist Missionary Society, may be said almost to have had its origin in the phrase of a Mr. Hughes, who when he listened to the claim of needy Wales for copies of the Bible exclaimed, "And if for Wales, why not for the whole world?" At all events, the Society received its name from this utterance. Once this Society and others like it were launched upon their world-wide endeavor the missions, most of them the creation of the same new enthusiasm, were the natural organizations through which the desired distribution of Bibles could take place. They were as well the sources whence new suggestions as to needed translations arose, they were the areas from which alone in most cases translators would be forth-coming. On the other hand, once the missions had faced their task they must have realized that the books which the Bible societies furnished could multiply the endeavors of their evangelists and preachers a thousandfold. The books could go where the evangelist had not yet been admitted, they could remain when he had departed, they could speak when his voice had been silenced. They could be to the nascent Christian communities all over the world the basis of culture, the means of the uplifting and fortifying and educating of the spirit of nations, just as the Bible had been in all the nations of the Protestant world since the era of the Reformation. It is not too much to say as we look back upon the history that either of these movements is almost unthinkable without the other.

Establishing thus an intimate relation in the service which throughout the century of their existence these two agencies have rendered, we shall not be surprised to find

that they had also a very close relation in their origin. The movement of the spirit of several Christian peoples which resulted in the formation of Bible societies and in the inauguration of the Protestant missionary propaganda had its common source in the pietist and evangelical fervor which, throughout the eighteenth century and far down into the nineteenth, proved a benediction, not alone to the continent of Europe and to Great Britain, but in scarcely less degree to our own country. Among the four *pia desideria*, the four first principles laid down by Spener at the very beginning of the Pietist movement, one was that of recurrence to the Scriptures. The Bible must be the very text-book of religion in the hands and hearts of all believers. Out of these German pietist circles came the missionaries who, early in the eighteenth century in Danish and Dutch and British colonies, first among Protestants, took up the task of foreign missions. This missionary work Roman Catholics had prosecuted ever since the Counter-Reformation and the origin of the Society of Jesus. The Protestants had left it until this moment almost untouched. It was upon the Bible that the Moravian community established its whole civil and economic and social life. It was the Moravian Brotherhood which sent out its missionaries, as Zinzendorf proudly said, to those places whither no one else could be found to go. It was this *Unitas Fratrum* which became in proportion to its numbers and its wealth the greatest missionary church since the Apostolic Age.

John Wesley had come into contact with the Moravians during his visit to Georgia. In London the Moravians had been used as the instruments under God of an experience of conversion on Wesley's part which was so vivid and wonderful that this man, with all of his saintly youth, the beautiful experiences in the Epworth parsonage and in Lincoln College in Oxford behind him, was yet fain at times to say that he had never been a Christian before. He visited the Moravians at Herrnhut. The passion for souls which sent them into every wilderness and solitary place in the foreign missionary field set him upon that wonderful home

mission, as we should now call it, to the neglected poor in the towns and again in the rural districts of England and Wales and even Ireland which the Methodist revival was destined to become. Whitfield, direct from his fellowship with the Wesleys, passed to his evangelistic tour in this country where he joined hands with Jonathan Edwards in the Great Awakening in New England and with Tennent and others in the Middle States. Not merely was that awakening decisive for the the future history of New England and New York and New Jersey, it afforded the religious background for many of the men who a generation later were influential in opening up the so-called Northwest Territory, with all of the epoch-making consequences which that movement had for the Middle West of our country. In America, this evangelistic, revivalistic, Bible-loving impulse furnished the foil alike to the dreary dogmatism which characterized the decline of the "Standing Order" with its fierce confessionalism, and as well the foil to the spread of rationalism, which came with the period of the great and natural influence of France in our national life consequent upon the aid which France had given to us in the Revolutionary War.

This evangelicalism furnished the foil to scholastic dogmatism and again to rationalism, precisely as the pietism of Kant and Schleiermacher had made them prophets of the new era in Germany. In the persons of Kant and Schleiermacher much that was best in both the movements of pietism and rationalism were combined and survived as, in the old days of the bitter strife, no one would have believed that they could be combined. There is hardly anything in literature more touching than the testimony of Kant in his old age to the Bible-loving home in which he had been brought up. As for Schleiermacher, the father of modern theology, there was no association in his whole life which left a greater impression upon him than did that with the schools of the Moravians at Niesky and Barby. This observation is true despite the fact that when he left Barby it was in bitterest revolt against pietism and in insatiable thirst for the larger opportunities which he felt

sure that the University of Halle would afford him. It was thus after all a pietist at heart, who shared their love of the Bible and their missionary enthusiasms, who became one of the founders of the University of Berlin. And what shall we say of a man like Oberlin, in his apostolic zeal for the neglected both of French and German tongues in his beloved Alsace? It was the British and Foreign Bible Society which came to his rescue and made possible a work so characteristic and impressive that when presently the inhabitants of a district in our own Western Reserve, to whom Charles Finney was by and by prophet and almost priest and king, sought a name for their village, the name of Oberlin seemed to them to say the most of all that they wished to have said. It is not an accident that at this very day the American Board draws more of the candidates for its missionary service from Oberlin than from any other college in the land, or that Oberlin is preparing to duplicate itself in a great Christian college in the province of Shansi in China.

Besides this connection between the evangelical revival and the missionary movement, we have to remember that both the Bible societies and the major missionary boards first saw the light in the midst of a period of great humane and moral and reforming struggles. In these struggles many of the very men most influential in the Bible and missionary movements were also concerned. There was, for example, that great revulsion of sentiment in England concerning the course of the administration of the East India Company. The movement was voiced by Burke. Its first spectacular episode was the impeachment of Warren Hastings. It never rested until it had amended and at last abolished the charter of the Company. By degrees it had won the consent of the Company to Bible work and missions, to which at first the directors had been violently hostile. It had set up presses and established education. It had abolished cruel rites in India. It had begun to give Indians participation in their own government. It had inaugurated medical work and sanitation, irrigation and famine relief. It had sent out to India in the generation

before the Mutiny a line of civil and military servants as high-minded and devoted as the government of any subject people ever saw. It had prepared the way for that solidarity of India with Britain which is one of the most notable features of the present war. This was the period also when Clarkson and Wilberforce were using every effort to bring about the abolition of the slave trade and presently of slavery within the British dominions. It was an era of reforms. It was the era of a great wave of democratic feeling which in its zeal for liberty and equality and fraternity brought on presently the French Revolution. It was the era which, so soon as the Napoleonic wars were over, set before itself, especially in Great Britain, certain social and economic reforms with which we are busied still. It was the era of a veritable contagion of ethical and humanitarian endeavors. No one can read the poetry of the period from Blake and Wordsworth through Shelley and Keats and Byron to Coleridge or again the prose even only of Carlyle, to mention no other, without being made to realize how high was the idealism which these great efforts set before themselves.

It was a misfortune that these two movements—the humanitarian and evangelistic—which in the beginning were so closely related the one to the other and which, in later years in all the movements of social religion, both in the home lands and in the mission fields, have come to supplement one another in such extraordinary way, were at the first hostile to one another. They long misunderstood one another completely. The misunderstanding was not unnatural. The official religion of most of these lands did array itself on the wrong side of many moral questions, for example, of the slavery question. Liberals were alienated from the evangelicals by the dogmatism of the latter and their other-worldliness. They were suspicious of their emotionalism and their bibliolity. The evangelicals, on the other hand, were afraid of rationalism, of what they called mere moralism and a religion of this world. So it has come to pass that there are liberal churches in our own country which have as good as no missionary history at all,

because they were not able at the beginning to understand the relation of the inner life of the individual soul to those social and economic achievements of which they dreamed. Conversely, there are churches now in our midst, churches even of the evangelical inheritance which, in their zeal for what they call a religion of this world, seem likely to forget that out of the heart are the issues of life. They run risk of losing all their spirituality in their so-called passion for the practical. Yet, despite these long misunderstandings, it cannot be denied that there exists this vital relation between the evangelistic impulse of which we more particularly speak and the great humane enthusiasms which possessed Europe and America at the end of the eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth. Not only so, but the Bible and missionary work, which at the first set out only to save souls, has exercised the most profound and salutary influence upon civilization as a whole, both in our own lands and in all other lands. It has done wonders in education, in reform and the general uplifting of man's life in this world, all the while that its adherents have professed, or rather, exactly because they have professed, that it is only by the life of the soul in and for the eternal that in the last analysis worthy civilization is achieved or maintained.

There is still another movement from which the Bible societies and the missionary propaganda received both direct and indirect advantage. To it in turn they made immeasurable contribution. Those last years of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth marked the period when Britain was becoming on the vast scale with which we are familiar "the mother of nations." The empires of conquest and trade which, in the period after the Renaissance had been connected with the names of Portugal and Spain both in the eastern and western hemispheres, had largely faded away. The empires of the Dutch and of the Danes had shrunk to insignificant holdings. The French had lost both Canada and India. They were presently to surrender Louisiana. Napoleon had dreamed of an eastern empire all the while that he was bringing Europe under his

sway. That France would recoup herself late in the nineteenth century in the subdivision of Africa could not be foreseen. The Russian Empire, though in the main it had its present boundaries, was then no great factor in civilization. England however had gained Australia and New Zealand and the South Sea Islands by discovery, India and Canada by conquest and was fastening a firm hold on China and the Malay Peninsula by her trade. She had lost indeed the thirteen seaboard colonies of North America by the war of the Revolution. She had lost them however to her own sons. The United States, despite its independence, was then far more purely a New England in all inner relations of its life than it now is. It is a new Europe, very significantly Anglo Saxon, even now. England had possessions in the West Indies, had touched South America and was building up South Africa.

It was the sense of obligation to the islanders in the South Seas which first quickened Carey, although in the end he spent his life in India. It was the sense of responsibility to the subject races which moved Henry Martyn and Claudius Buchanan and Reginald Heber in one way, as presently it moved Lord William Bentinck and Lord John Lawrence and Sir Henry Lawrence and Sir Henry Havlock in another. Chinese Gordon's Bible is preserved with a reverence which no one has thought of paying to his sword, true soldier as he was. These things all have an intimate relation. The original antagonism between the commercial empire and the missionaries and the Bible agents yielded just as the opposition between the religious propaganda and the humanitarian and reforming schemes had done. The day came when the Empire recognized as among the most illustrious of its builders the Scottish Free-Church educational enthusiast Alexander Duff. The administrators of the world-wide empire saw that they could not solve one of a thousand of all their deeper problems save by an appeal to the inner life, to the souls of men. Just so, on the other hand, the most zealous advocates of the purely spiritual gospel, with its effort to make men citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, had learned that both converts and mission-

aries most evidence their citizenship of Heaven by making their practical contribution to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. The transformation of the aims and ends of the British Empire in India, the change in the animus of Europe in dealing with Asiatics and Africans, the desire really to confer civilization, the perception that civilization is not merely that of the outward life, the change of mind of eastern nations toward western civilization in the course of the nineteenth century, is a most wonderful thing. It is hardly less wonderful to behold how the churches and missions which would at first have nothing to do with humanitarian reforming, economic or social endeavors, have become the centers of every humane endeavor and the conscientious furtherers of every form of present and temporal human good.

There is a curious and suggestive connection in the history of learning in Europe between printing and Bibles. This connection is moreover in surprising fashion evident again in the spread, during the nineteenth century, of western civilization in the East, whether at the hands of imperial and commercial or again of evangelizing and spiritual agencies. The first book which came in great numbers from the presses set up in Germany and England, in Holland and Switzerland, in Italy and France, during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, was the Bible. Until after the Civil War in England and the Thirty Years War in Germany it may be doubted if the dissemination of all other kinds of literature combined equalled in volume the output from the presses of Bibles and of books pertaining directly to the Bible and the religious life. This is true in spite of the fact that in England after 1611 the publication of the Bible was a government monopoly. Similarly, within the nations both of the near and of the far East, when late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth centuries, western printing-presses began to be set up by representatives of European colonial governments or trading companies or, on the other hand, by Christian missionaries and educational enthusiasts, in many cases the Bible was the first book issued. In all these lands it was the western book

most widely circulated. This was true for a time even of the most highly civilized of eastern lands. Furthermore, in scores and in hundreds of the minor tribes and peoples, as in Africa, in North America and the Islands, the languages were first reduced to writing in order that Bibles might be printed in them. In some the Bible has remained to this day the only book which ever was printed. The only education of these peoples, in so far as they have had any education, has grown up about this which was their only, or by far their most significant book. Their civil and social life was based upon this book. In some cases again among North American or African tribes or among the Islanders of the South Seas where the languages have died, this one printed book, the Bible, remains forever the only witness to philologists and ethnographers what those languages were like and what the ethnic affiliations of those lost peoples may have been. To take an example near home, there is only the one book in existence from which we have any knowledge whatsoever what the language of Eliot's Indians, in his missionary settlements at Natick and Nonantum, was like. That book is John Eliot's Bible, the publication of which was subsidized by the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, a society founded by the Long Parliament in 1649. A copy of this book is one of the great treasures of the library of Wellesley College.

For many reasons the discovery of printing brought no such immediate revolution in the life of Europe as we might at first thought have expected to find. The type of education remained in remarkable degree despite printing the old aristocratic type, the education for leadership. Printing, through its share in the Renaissance and the Reformation, had done much to remove the ecclesiastical stamp of culture. It was however very far from having made that culture democratic in the sense which we now understand. At the end of the eighteenth century in Europe, books were still for the relatively few. Magazines and newspapers were about as different from those of our day as anything we can well imagine. It was the nineteenth century in

which the cheapness of the manufacture of paper, the existence of post and telegraph for the gathering of news, the increase of the means of transportaion for the printed product, the organization of the vast publishing business, the enormous proportionate increase of the number of those persons who can read, which have brought about that popularization of certain elements at least of the intellectual life which we ordinarily associate with the influence of the press. Now the nineteenth century is the period in which the East and Africa and the Islands, touched by the life of Europe and America, have had the press. They had no share at all in these matters during the period of which I have spoken when our advance was slow. They have kept pace with us in the rapid progress of the nineteenth century. Europeans and the Europe which was transplanted to America took four hundred and fifty years to travel from Guttenberg's Bible to the yellowest of the yellow Sunday morning papers. India has traversed the same distance in a century, Japan in half a century. China had the Bible nearly a century ago and has not reached the yellowest journal yet. The first presses in the Ottoman Empire were missionary presses. The first printed books were Bibles. The vast influx of books printed in the West for use in Turkey was for a long time made up of Bibles and religious books. Educational books followed the establishment of the missionary colleges. The censorship has at times largely stopped these. It has until the present day almost absolutely stopped everything else. In India, the first presses established by the company's government worked harmoniously, especially under Lord Mornington, with that remarkable publishing institution at Serampore where Carey unfolded all his genius as linguist and translator and his high qualities even as a business man. It is only in more recent years that one can speak of popular literature or of the "revolver press" in India.

In China, Morrison and Milne, so long shut up from the work of evangelism upon which they had set their hearts, laid broad and deep foundations of western learning in the Chinese languages. They produced not merely Bible

translations but grammars and dictionaries. They won their first long-awaited-for converts among the literary men who had aided them in their Bible translation work. In Turkey, the early missionaries like Pliny Fiske had sought, first the conversion of the Jews, then the awakening of the ancient Christian churches and for a long time almost despaired of converting one man from among Mohammedans. They turned to Bible translation and literary work, to the founding of schools and colleges, to medical work. They felt that they might thus open doors otherwise obstinately closed. It is not certain that they did not thus influence the whole civilization of the Ottoman Empire more profoundly than in so short a time, at all events, they could otherwise have done. No one can pass under the arch of the Bible House in Constantinople without being thrilled with the sense of all the influences which have gone out over the whole of the near East from within those walls. Here American missionaries were chiefly engaged, above all the great trio of translators, Schauffler and Riggs and Van Dyke. Here it was the American Bible Society which supported the work and distributed through its colporteurs and agents all the manifold products of the press. Here they were Americans, Cyrus Hamlin and George Washburn and Daniel Bliss and Mary Patrick, who have founded the great institutions of learning, now independent corporations but then under the American Board of Missions, later, in part also under the Presbyterian Board. Many of the colleges and normal schools and scores of secondary schools in Asia Minor are still under the American Board, all basing their instruction in the last analysis upon the Christian book of life. In overwhelming measure Turkey is an American missionary and Bible Society field. It is an American educational field. This is one reason why the fate of the Armenian population and the outlook of the Ottoman Empire as a whole in the present crisis fairly holds us breathless until we can see a little farther into the future than we yet can do. The only thing which alike the Bible Society and the mission board know, the only thing of which the great universities on the Bosphorus and at the foot of

Lebanon, as a result of a century of history, are sure, is that there has never been a time of anguish like this present one, a time of suffering for our peoples and of fear of the destruction of our work, which has not resulted in yet greater enlargement and in more real and spiritual success in our work.

Allusion was made at the beginning of this article to that extraordinary catalogue of Bibles in the library of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is a book of four large volumes and of 1750 pages. It contains more than nine thousand entries of Bibles or parts of Bibles in more than six hundred distinct languages or dialects which are now spoken, besides editions in some eighty languages or dialects now obsolete. In overwhelming proportion these versions have been published by one or another of the three great Bible societies—the British, the American and the Scottish, by a few of the great missionary societies, or else they have been made possible through subvention from one or another of these societies to missionary presses in all lands. In overwhelming proportion the versions mentioned in the British catalogue have been published during the nineteenth century or in the first decade of the twentieth. It may be doubted whether the Bible existed in thirty different languages or dialects in the year 1804, in which the British Society received its charter. In overwhelming proportion these translations made during the nineteenth century are the work of missionaries and their native assistants in the fields in which the missionaries worked and for the sake of the peoples on behalf of whom they were giving their lives.

Professor Hope Moulton expressed not long since the opinion that there is scarcely a published record of the transactions of any learned society in the world which represents a greater achievement than that which is described in the catalogue of these more than six hundred separate versions of the whole or of parts of the Bible into as many different living languages and dialects. In some cases, as in those of the versions into the Mandarin or into Arabic, or for the benefit of the Brahmans in India or the Buddhists

in Japan, the work has been done by individuals or, as more commonly, by commissions, groups of men equal in learning to any scholars of their day. The translators aimed by their endeavor to put the sacred books of the Christian faith into circulation in the midst of a world of the learned and the critical, not to say a world prepossessed in the favor of other religions. It aimed to set the Scriptures of the Christian faith in worthy fashion side by side with sacred books of the East in the very homes of those sacred books and the seats of their immeasurable influence. The devotees of other faiths, proud of their own immemorial traditions of literary culture, must receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, more particularly the latter, in a form in which their superficial prejudices, at all events, would be disarmed and in which no slightest accessory of grace of style and of external perfectness were to be neglected, if the inward truth for which the souls of the translators were concerned was to have free course. There are numbers of these translations into the classical literatures of the world, into the languages of the races of ancient cultivation, upon the perpetual revision of which the labor literally of generations of devoted students has been poured out. It could not be permitted that the gospel should be presented in a form wholly inferior to that of the *Analects*, even in the judgment of the most critical Chinese. It would not do that the Scriptures of the Christians should be unworthy of comparison in form at least with the Buddhist or Zoroastrian scriptures or with the *Vedas* in their own home lands, or that the revelation of Jesus should be, for lack of literary care, repellant to those to whom the *surahs* of the *Koran* are dear. The problem was to present the characteristic ideas of the Jewish and Christian religions in such a manner as to win understanding and even approval on the part of men to whom and to whose ancestors every subtlest shade of moral distinction and every perfect utterance of spiritual insight had been immemorially familiar. No light task, it must be confessed, to be performed by foreigners, even when they could bring the most learned of their converts, and literati not their converts, to their aid.

At the opposite pole from these relatively few translations into the vernaculars of the great oriental civilizations, into the few languages of the world's great religions, are the far more numerous cases in which the tongues of the various peoples whom it was sought to reach had produced almost no literature and contained but few and poor equivalents, or even no equivalents whatsoever, for the words and phrases fundamental to the Christian speech. The translations spoken above had been works of stupendous labor, but that labor was of a far different sort from that of which we now are to speak. Jest has been made as to the difficulty of translating, for example, a psalm touching the praise of God in nature as men knew nature in Palestine, into the language, say, of the Eskimo upon their treeless shores, with their limited fauna and their frozen streams. There was the difficulty of describing sheep and camels and even horses to a South Sea islander, whose only quadrupeds were pigs and rats. What does one do with a chapter like that of the Good Shepherd under such circumstances? These are, however, minor difficulties compared with the rendering of such words as faith or justification, atonement, sanctification, redemption, into the speech of peoples whose very religion contained no such notions or even furnished quite opposite conceptions and called out only contrary emotions. What shall one say of the difficulty of the task of him who, desiring to make the New Testament mean to his group of practically naked and recently cannibal converts what it meant to him in his youth, finds that his first step must be to accustom his ear to analyze the elements of articulation in a dialect which has never had an alphabet. His next step must be to make up his mind about the syntax of a speech which never had a grammar. He must learn the names for things and ideas in a tongue which never had a dictionary. He must be the first to write a speech which no one before him ever dreamed of writing. He must then teach to read this written speech adult children of whose race no man ever yet read a word. He must create a desire for a book and then create a book to meet the desire. That work has been done not only scores but several hun-

dreds of times in the nineteenth century. It has been done almost inevitably by missionaries who were giving their whole lives to the tribes or the islands concerned. No one else would have been competent to the task. Even then it would all have been done in vain had there been no Bible societies to publish these books. It needs no saying that there was no market for them, at all events no market which could call the books into being, at best and most a little market for the books when they had come into being. It has been the boast of the societies never to refuse a work of this sort for a tribe or island of the smallest number or of the lowest level, if only someone offered to do the translating and if the society could be offered any reasonable guarantee that the work would be well done. In spite of all that has been accomplished, it is said that there are still a thousand languages and dialects into which translations could be made. On the other hand, it is certainly true, as for example in Africa, that with the great movements of population which have come with the means of transportation and the call for labor in the great centers, the isolated tribal life of many groups is being broken up, the tribal dialects are being lost. Kaffir and Zulu and English are becoming languages of universal communication, so that many tribal tongues now existent will soon have none to speak them and translations which have been made will have none to read them or at least few who can read these alone. The same thing is true of the South Sea Island population which moreover are fast vanishing away. The same thing is true of North American Indian tribes. When one thinks of the lives of the missionary scholars which have been poured into this task, lives which might just as well have been expended, had those who lived them so preferred, in learned investigations in some university, in literary labor which would have brought fame or made money, he must bow in humble recognition to some who are unknown to philologists or anthropologists and almost unknown even to missionary enthusiasts, who have nevertheless been wholly content if, as a result of the labor of their lives, they could

put the word of God into the hands of men and women and little children of the tribe they loved.

The American Bible Society alone issued in the year 1915 something over six million copies of Bibles, or parts of the Bible, in some of the one hundred and sixty-nine different languages on its list. In the hundred years of its existence it has issued more than one hundred and ten million copies of the Bible or of portions of the Bible. It has spent \$38,000,000. The British and Foreign Bible Society in its first hundred and twelve years, from 1804 to 1916, has four hundred and ninety-seven languages to its credit on its list of versions. It has issued three times as many copies of Bibles or of parts of the Bible as the American Society and has spent two and one-half times the income. It issued in 1915 alone eleven million copies, four and a half of which went to the armies in the field. It is certain that the major societies have put into circulation within the last century more than five hundred million copies of the Scripture, by no means all gratis, yet also practically never at cost. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which is in some sense the immediate congener of the American Bible Society, spent in the year 1915 \$1,100,000 in its work. In one hundred years it had spent about \$40,000,000. Yet these figures are far surpassed by those of both the Presbyterian Church North and of the Methodist Church North, although neither of these organizations is yet a century old, the Presbyterian Church having co-operated with the American board until 1837, part of it indeed until 1869. The Church Missionary Society of England, which is the immediate congener of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the year before the war surpassed any of the American societies mentioned, in the cost of its work and in the statistics of its results. The major missionary societies of the Protestant world in the year 1914 spent more than \$35,000,000 on their work.

The writer of this article made a beginning a few years ago of gathering for the library of Harvard University a collection of the versions of the Bible or of parts of the Bible which have been produced in connection with missionary

work. The collection has attained to the proportion of nearly one-half of this department of the famous library of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Indeed, this collection has been made possible in large part through the generosity of that society and of others like it. It is thought to be a collection unique among the college or university libraries in America. It has aroused the interest of students not alone of religion but of philology, of anthropology and of education.

It suggests itself how interesting it would be if we could answer questions parallel to those dealt with above, concerning other literatures both sacred and profane. How many translations are there of the Koran, especially how many translations into the relatively primitive languages and for the sake of use in the great Mohammedan propaganda? It is well known that there is a vast Mohammedan missionary movement in Africa with Cairo as its center. It is true that it is a mission almost exclusively to the illiterate. This however is true of the Christian missions in Africa as well. The difference lies rather in the fact that the Mohammedan mission leaves its converts largely illiterate. As one looks at the thousands of youths in the Great Mosque at Cairo who are said to be preparing for this work, he gets the impression that there are few indeed of these students who are learned in anything beyond the traditional interpretation of the Koran. It is only by some latitude that a comparison between this famous school and the Christian preparation of missionaries can be allowed. For these men will be mostly traders and enthusiastic missionaries of Islam in a manner only incidental to their travels and business. Still, as we were saying, it would be a most interesting thing to know how many copies of the Koran are used in this work and in how many languages of Africa translations exist. How many version are there of the Buddhist sacred writings in China or Japan or in both countries together? And again we say, not merely how many translations exist into the languages of the great civilizations and for the delectation of the learned of the world, although, of course, that fact has also an interest of its own, but how many trans-

lations of Buddhist sacred books are there into the languages of primitive peoples and in the interest of Buddhist propaganda? Is there anywhere any such Buddhist propaganda on a great scale? It is well known that there is a great revival of Buddhism in Japan, a most serious effort to adjust that faith to modern education and life in Japan. There is much literature of the Buddhist controversy with Christianity in Japan. Has this had great effect in the dissemination of Buddhist scriptures?

How many versions are there of the great classics of Hinduism into the many vernaculars of the minor tribes of India, to most of which the Christian Scriptures are already finding access? One almost knows beforehand what the answer to this question will be. Caste is a great barrier. The whole point of view about religion in India is different. For that degree and kind of religiousness which is expected of the tribesman not much knowledge of the doctrines and mysteries of Hinduism would be supposed to be necessary. Or, to put it differently, exactly because religion for the Hindu is knowledge and insight, it scarcely exists for the ignorant except in the form of rites and ceremonies. One of the great effects of the contact with Christianity however is going to be everywhere the reviving, renewing, reforming of the indigenous faiths. It can hardly fail that, with the great relative increase in all these lands of the numbers of those who can read, an organized effort for the dissemination of their respective sacred books will have place.

Answers to these questions raised above concerning the circulation of the sacred literatures of the ethnic faiths are extremely difficult to obtain from any sources of information which we now possess. It is striking however to note how difficult it is to obtain similar answers concerning the great secular literatures; for example, even concerning our own English literature. One of the authors of the British and Foreign Bible Society's catalogue made a few attempts in this inquiry, seeking to find out the number of translations in which certain great classics of world-literature exist. The inquiry has never yet been made on a great

scale. Its results would assuredly be most interesting. It appears that the *Iliad* is known to have been published in over twenty of the leading languages of Europe. The Shakesperean Memorial Library at Birmingham gives evidence that the master poet may be read, in whole or in part, in twenty-seven different languages. The British Museum Catalogue enumerates forty different versions of the *Imitation of Christ*. Books of Count Tolstoy are said to have appeared in forty-seven different languages. The Religious Tract Society asserted that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has appeared in one hundred different translations. In other words, so far as this inquiry goes, the only book which appears in more than one-tenth as many versions as the Bible is itself closest kin to the Bible. It is almost made out of the Bible. Furthermore, the only one of these books mentioned which has made any large invasion of the primitive languages has undoubtedly been largely translated by missionaries for the edification of the same clientele for which they translated the Bible. Surely these few facts are most interesting in themselves and cast an extraordinary light upon the joint achievement of Bible societies and missions with which this article is concerned.

For, when all is said, we are not chiefly interested with statistics, nor is it our main aim to set forth the magnitude of this work as an intellectual achievement. It was not an intellectual end as such which the laborers set before themselves, however much of intellectual self-respect they may have had in their task. It is sufficiently impressive that the Bible or parts of the Bible have appeared within the last century in so and so many hundreds of languages, that it has been sold or given away in so many hundreds of millions of copies and thus come within the reach of certainly a thousand million of the human race. But even these are misleading comparisons. The fact is not merely that the Bible has been read in so and so many copies. The question is of the results which have followed upon its reading. We know the elevating and refining influence of good literature, the stimulus and illumination of science and history and criticism or of any other form of thought. It would be

foolish to belittle what these have done for the elevation of mankind. Yet the more heartily we speak their praise, the more astounding will appear in contrast the work done by the pages of the book which the Bible societies and missions have been mainly concerned to put forth. That work has been the work of moral renewal and spiritual uplift. It has been the work of conviction of sin and of righteousness. It has been that of the guidance of the perplexed, the comfort of the sorrowing, the giving of hope to those in despair. We see occasionally in the literature of the propaganda tales of which some may seem to us sentimental or exaggerated and some almost beyond belief. Yet under our own eyes, in mission and settlement work among the submerged here at home, a single sentence from these pages has been sufficient to work the change by which the impure have been restored to purity, the dissolute to sobriety, the unstable have become courageous and responsible, the selfish full of generous consecration. What we know here at home has been multiplied a thousandfold abroad. Tales from the South Sea Islands, from Uganda and of the early days of the opening of Japan leave no doubt of this assertion. It would be strange if in the primitive world, or again in the world not necessarily primitive but, at all events, not Bible-worn, things had not occurred undreamed-of in our philosophy. No one who has any imagination can fail to realize that nearly any one of all the versions which his eye may fall upon in this great catalogue has human documents for its commentary. We turn these pages listlessly. We read only the entry of the date of the version, the size, the contents, the name of the missionary who produced it, the society which published it or subsidized its publication. We learn nothing about the men for whom it was produced. Surely however we are quite safe in assuming that there is not one of these versions which has not behind it the record of lives transformed through its instrumentality. When one thinks of these things, a book which when it was opened seemed but a dry and curious catalogue, becomes upon reflection a source of wonder and admiration and of boundless gratitude. If we are thinking of the forces which have

made for the expansion of Christendom and the naturalization of Christianity in the Orient and Africa and the Islands of the nineteenth century, here is one which is of the first order of importance. Here is an influence which is at the basis of all the education and moral life and spiritual renewal which the Bible societies and the missions have united to exert, of all the contribution which they have made to the development of the race.

Turning again as we close to the homelands, what shall we say of the fact that the Bible societies have been in their interdenominational character a bond of unity in the missionary work and a reminder of the universality of the Christian message, at times when the missionary propaganda threatened to descend to a war of the sects. The earliest missionary societies had been, like the Bible societies themselves, not ecclesiastical agents, not the organizations of particular churches to meet this new need of the time. Quite the contrary. The churches were as such at first almost universally unwilling to enter upon the missionary task. The missionary societies were chartered bodies composed of individuals gathered out of almost every communion, who had what they conceived to be a great need of men and plan of God upon their hearts. The Bible societies were constituted in precisely the same manner and have so remained. The missionary societies, on the other hand, have been very largely appropriated by the denominations. New ones have arisen on the initiative of the denominations. The churches grew ashamed of their lukewarmness. They were zealous to prosecute a work which they had at its inception almost ignored. There came in the missionary work about the middle of the nineteenth century a great wave of sectarianism, profoundly unlike the breadth and Christian unity which had marked the first years. It is also unlike the spirit of comity and comprehensiveness, the desire to bury all sectarianism which animates the best missionary movements in our own time. That era of sectarianism in missions is however an ugly fact which cannot be ignored. It corresponded to an era of intense sectarian strife here in our own land and of mutual

jealousy and intolerance among Christians in various ecclesiastical bodies in England and Scotland as well. In that access of denominational fervor the ecclesiastical politicians in all bodies were eager to possess and to exploit a work which was already successful, which they would hardly have touched had it failed. This sectarian bigotry was bad enough at home. It was however more harmful and less explicable in the mission field. It is a chapter over which we do well to grow contrite. Most churches and missionary societies have by this time turned over a new leaf and pray that the old may be forgiven of God and forgotten of men.

Now all this while the Bible societies pursued the even tenor of their way, true to the impulse of their beginning and to the idea which must rule in the end. They were interdenominational and non-sectarian. They stood for the word of God while the missions too often emphasized also the tradition of men. This is not to say but that the Bible Societies themselves, as in the controversy over the Apocrypha, became confused among the traditions of men, and in their view of revelation and inspiration held informally and unofficially at least very debatable theological views. Still, being necessary to all the churches and the churches all being necessary to it, the Bible society tended always to remind them of their common elements and to lift them above their contentions. It did this for the churches at home and the service which it thus rendered was even more significant in the mission fields abroad. After the middle of the nineteenth century it was greatly aided in this task also by the Christian Associations. It knew little about the boundaries which fenced the various preserves of Protestants. What is even more remarkable, it set itself over the walls which surround the Greek and Roman Catholic churches. Very wonderful are those chapters in the history of the Bible societies, and particularly of our own American society, in which is recorded the fact that, at times at least, considerable portions of the Roman Catholic world have not been animated by that disposition altogether to prevent the circulation of the Scriptures which

has commonly been attributed to this branch of the Christian church. On the contrary, from the beginning colporteurs and agents of the Bible society have gone for years up and down countries like Austria and Italy and Spain and the South American republics where a Protestant missionary would hardly have been tolerated. The life of George Borrow and his contribution to literature is famous. His services in the study of the gypsy languages were so conspicuous that it is sometimes forgotten that he was by profession an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Under the Greek church also, particularly in Russia, beginning with the curious pietistical enthusiasms of Alexander I, there was sympathy for Bible work almost throughout the century and throughout the length and breadth of that great land. Only very recently and still in limited degree, is there opportunity for missionary propaganda in any of these lands and Protestant educational institutions are still likely to be looked at askance. The *Syllabus* of Pius IX indeed condemned Bible societies. That fact is evidence that these societies had made themselves felt in lands subject to the Pope's spiritual rule. But then even Frederic Denison Maurice condemned Anglicans who would associate with Protestants in Bible society work. Only very recently has it been possible to hold a conference which sought to canvass in high-minded fashion the principles which should govern the advocacy of freer religion in Latin-American lands. Even to this conference there was objection and fear on the part of some lest it should turn out that only sectarianism was at stake. To others it appears that only sectarianism feels that fear. It requires no prophet to see that for long years to come in Catholic lands, whether Roman or Greek, it will be the Bible work which, of all the aspects of mission work, will arouse least opposition and find readiest acceptance. It is this which will render largest contribution to the renewal of national and individual life.

One more reflection is germane to the trying circumstances in which alike the Bible Society's work and the missionary work find themselves in some at least of their fields as

these anniversary years come round. The London Missionary Society, founded in 1795, was the first of a series of like associations which came into being during the stress of the period following the French Revolution or again, during the Napoleonic wars. The Church Missionary Society was formed in 1799. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804 and during the whole first decade of its existence England was involved in the struggle with Napoleon. Our own country stood somewhat on one side from that great struggle, as we now do from the present world conflict. Nevertheless it was profoundly influenced. The dearth of Bibles in this country, which led to the foundation of local societies which antedated the American Bible Society, was one of the direct consequences of the severing of our relation with Great Britain, for there were still government regulations touching the issue of the so-called "Authorized" version, the King James Bible. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the first American missionary society, received its charter in 1812; the American Bible Society in 1816. State and county and city Bible societies had existed in this country before that, but mainly for local purposes and for what we should call home missionary ends. Neither in our own country nor yet in Great Britain can we fail to be impressed with the fact that it was out of the midst of those years of turmoil and stress and anxiety concerning the homelands that this access of fervor on behalf of all humanity made itself felt. It was in the years of poverty and heavy taxation that the contributions to these causes began to roll up. There was a certain cosmopolitanism and sense of the unity of all humanity which the international struggle had brought out. There was a deepening of the moral sense and a turning to the sources of comfort and of spiritual strength which were just as noticeable in their own way as were, on the other hand, the demoralization and lowering of standard wrought by the brutalities and miseries of the war. Someone had quoted in one of the early sessions of the British society that beautiful text: "The walls of Jerusalem were built in troublous times." Never a truer word was said.

Every sentence above written is applicable, only in far wider sense, to the emergency in which we now stand. The present international conflict has brought out horrid racial antipathies. It has also set us all yearning for the brotherhood which alone can bring peace. If we are horror-stricken by crimes and atrocities which seem sometimes to threaten the very existence of our civilization, yet also these dreadful days have fostered the mood of universal charity and philanthropy, of mercy and self-sacrifice, of consecration to the healing of wounds which we have been powerless to prevent. There is especially in our own land a marvelously increased knowledge of and interest in the life and lot of peoples whose names are now every day upon men's lips, while only two years ago to the great majority of our countrymen they were vague and remote. The Napoleonic struggle barely touched the lands outside of Europe. The present conflict has hardly left the remotest tribe of all humanity untouched. Nations which we have patronized in our self-sufficiency now mock us because of the downfall of our civilization. We can neither lift ourselves up nor aid the other nations in recovery save in the turning again to moral issues and spiritual aims, to forces which in our prosperity we were tempted to ignore. The Ambassador of our own country to Turkey, himself a Jew, spoke recently to a Christian missionary society concerning its work in the Ottoman Empire and mainly in murdered Armenia. That work seems sometimes levelled with the ground. Yet it had been our greatest field, our joy and pride for a hundred years. The Ambassador said: "Do not think of abandoning that work or of retrenching in that field. Even now while the war lasts your missionaries are almost the only agents of relief of any sort in that stricken land. There is immeasurable need of your presence there even now. There will be still greater opportunity when once the war is over. Then you will face in that land an opening such as you have never dreamed of." A teacher returned from Constantinople within a month reports that although the schools, especially in the country, are often closed, the mission churches scattered, only famine relief and medical

work and the orphanages in full activity, yet even so, the spiritual opportunity of which these missionaries would fain avail themselves is open as almost never before. Especially is this true of Bible work. The comfort of the Scriptures can still, even under these abnormal circumstances, be extended to a people to whom almost every other comfort except the alleviation of their most immediate and dreadful wants is denied. Not in vain have these peoples been taught to read. Not in vain has the land been sown with Testaments and Gospels. These seeds, although at the moment they seemed to fall into the ground and die, yet abide not alone. They have promise and potency in the life of these stricken peoples in the age which is to be. "The walls of Jerusalem were built in troublous times." It has always been so. There are obvious reasons in the nature of religious work why it always will be so.